Rhodes University Quality Promotion[1] Framework
for
Teaching & Learning

1. Preamble

In accordance with the HEQC's Founding Document (CHE, 2001), the definition of quality used at Rhodes University is 'fitness for purpose' which is located within a 'fitness of purpose' framework based on national transformation goals, priorities and targets.

The purpose of this Quality Promotion Framework is to ensure that teaching is fit for the purpose of allowing students to meet the outcomes set for the programmes of study for which they are enrolled. Elements of the framework, such as policies, need to be aligned with the strategic vision of the institution as expressed in the Institutional Development Plan and other documents.

The Framework assumes that responsibility for the quality of teaching and learning lies with the faculties and academic departments. The responsibility of the University is to provide the physical infrastructure for teaching to take place and to offer support and guidance for those who need to fulfil policy requirements.

2. Definitions of terms used in this Framework

Assessment criteria
This term refers to what students have to do to demonstrate to an assessor that they have met the outcomes for a course/module/qualification.

Benchmarking
The process of comparing the quality, including the scope, content, level of difficulty and so on of a department's offerings to similar offerings at other universities. Benchmarking can include surveys of relevant websites of comparable departments or institutions. External examiner reports on courses and assessments also constitute a form of benchmarking.

Course

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[1] Quality promotion refers to the development of a programme of activities to institutionalise a quality culture at Rhodes University and the commitment to continuous quality improvement.

At Rhodes University, the term 'course' refers to a semester long programme of study or, alternatively, a yearlong programme of study. Courses can be broken down into smaller modules or units addressing specific topics or taught by different individuals.

Course Review
This term refers to the evaluation processes undertaken by a department to ensure that a course is relevant and meets students' learning needs

Curriculum alignment
Curriculum alignment refers to coherence between different levels of curriculum as well as elements within a curriculum. At the macro level, it means vertical coherence between the purpose of a qualification, qualification exit level outcomes and outcomes for courses and modules. At the meso level, it means horizontal coherence between courses and between modules that make up a course. At a micro level, curriculum alignment refers to internal coherence between course/module elements, that is: purpose of course/module, learning outcomes, teaching methodologies and assessment methods.

Evaluation
This refers to the elicitation of perceptions of a course or module from a number of perspectives (for example, students, peers, external examiners, self). These perceptions are then balanced against each other in order to identify strengths and weaknesses. Empirical data related to success or throughput rates and theory and research can also be used in this process.

Formative assessment
This term refers to assessment that is predominantly intended to develop student learning through the provision of feedback.

Learning outcome
A learning outcome describes what students should be able to do by the time they have completed a module, course or programme leading to a qualification. Outcomes are complex and embody knowledge, skills, practices and values/attitudes.

Module
This term refers to a part of a course focusing on a particular topic.

Summative assessment
This term refers to assessment that is predominantly intended to measure learning against a set of published criteria.

3. Scope of this Framework

Rhodes University Quality Promotion Framework for Teaching and Learning applies to quality promotion of all taught courses and programmes of the University including undergraduate, honours, post-graduate diplomas and taught masters programmes. The principles of this Framework also apply for the development, teaching and learning and management of short learning courses offered by Rhodes University.

4. Elements of the Framework

4.1. Policies
The Framework should be read in conjunction with Rhodes University policies on:
- Teaching and Learning
- Curriculum Development and Review
- The Assessment of Student Learning
- The Evaluation of Teaching and Course Design
- External Examining
- Plagiarism
- Postgraduate Supervision
- Online Education
- Recognition of Prior Learning

The Framework should also be read in conjunction with:
- The CHE Quality Assurance Guidelines for Emergency Remote Teaching and Learning and Assessment During the Covid-19 Pandemic in 2020
- The CHE Quality Assurance Guidelines for the Covid-19 Pandemic. An Abbreviated Resource for 2020

4.2. Implementation
Policies need to be implemented. Support needs to be available for this implementation. Reflection on implementation needs to take place.

4.3. Monitoring and oversight
Monitoring and oversight of the implementation of policies needs to take place. This has both a quality assurance and quality enhancement function.
- Quality Assurance: Adherence to the policy is important for quality assurance. Monitoring therefore needs to ensure that policies are applied.
- Quality Enhancement: Monitoring needs to ensure reflection on implementation so that the learning that emerges from reflection, which has the potential to enhance practice, can thus inform policy review.
- Departmental leadership is the first level of academic quality promotion oversight, the Faculty board provides oversight at Faculty level while the Senate (through the respective subcommittees) provides oversight at institutional level.

4.4. Review
Policies need to be reviewed on the basis of reflection resulting from implementation and monitoring, changes in the context and developments in the field of higher education.

4.5. Reflection
Key to the enhancement of quality is ongoing reflection on what is done in the arena of teaching and learning and the use of this reflection to improve the academic offering.

4.6. Support

Reflection on policies, the way they are implemented and what we learn from monitoring this implementation needs to be informed by theory and research from the field of Higher Education Studies rather than by commonsense assumptions which can serve to maintain the status quo in rapidly changing contexts. At Rhodes University, support for teaching and learning is provided by the Centre for Higher Education Research, Teaching and Learning (CHERTL).

5. A diagrammatic representation of the quality framework
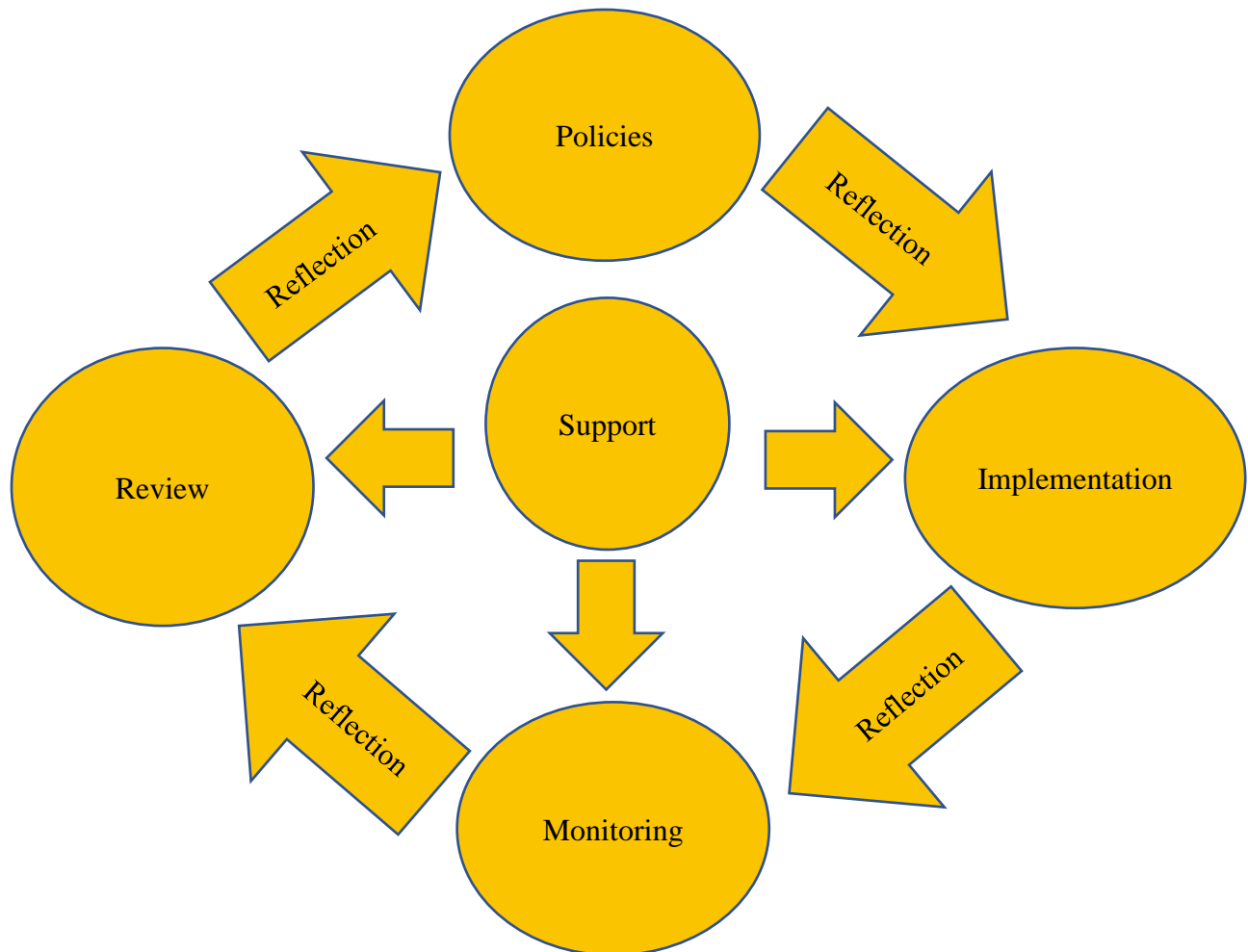
6. Procedures

(i) In the case of general formative degrees, quality promotion will take place at *course/module* level[2].

(ii) In the case of programmes, curriculum teams, in collaboration with HoDs, have to ensure that there is horizontal and vertical alignment between all courses in the programme.

(iii) Course coordinators are responsible for ensuring that policies are implemented.

(iv) Course coordinators will be required to report on the way policies have been implemented in *three-year cycles* using the forms in Appendices 1 & 2. Forms will need to be accompanied by supporting evidence.

(v) Evaluations[3] will be included in course coordinator reports provided to HoDs and Deans at the end of each year.

(vi) HoDs will develop a schedule for submission of course reports in collaboration with departmental colleagues. The schedule will ensure that reports for all courses offered by the department are submitted to HoDs by course coordinators once every three years.

(vii) Although formal submission of course folders will only occur in three-year cycles, course coordinators are encouraged to hold annual meetings with colleagues teaching on the course for which they are responsible in order to update evidence, consider suggestions for improvement to the course and modify responses to the questions on the form.

(viii) The folders of courses due for review at the end of any academic year will be submitted to the Dean by HoDs by no later than 31 January of the following year.

(ix) The folders will be accompanied by a covering letter written by the HoD confirming that a meeting has been held within the department to consider the implementation of policies and any changes to the courses that have resulted from this process.

(x) Copies of course folders should be made available to the Institutional Research and Quality Promotion Division through the Deans' office for central archiving as a requirement for external institutional reviews.

(xi) Deans will establish a Faculty working group to consider the course submissions and to report any observations to Faculty.

(xii) The Faculty working group will report to the Faculty Board, Academic Programmes and Curriculum Quality Committee and thereafter to the Senate every year.

(xiii) Deans, HoDs or programme coordinators will be required to report on the horizontal alignment and vertical alignment of courses that make up the programme in *three-year cycles* using the form in Appendix 3.

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[2] At Rhodes University formative degree programmes as well as a small number of programmes leading to professional qualifications, such as the BPharm where the curriculum is stipulated by a professional body are offered. In formative degree programmes students take a series of courses, at least two of which are majors that do not necessarily align in the way that courses in a professional programme would. In general formative degree programmes the unit of analysis is the discipline. Departments therefore need to ensure the quality of their programmes by examining the quality and horizontal alignment of the courses or modules across courses in Psychology 1 and the vertical alignment of the offerings across years of the Psychology programme (Psychology 1, 2 and 3).

[3] Evaluation is understood as the critical reflection on data from a range of sources – students, peers, lecturers' own reflections and assessment results which together make up 'an evaluation'.

APPENDIX 1
Module/Course Information

Module/Course Information

1	Module/Course Title	
2	Internal code	
3	Credits	
4	Faculty in which module/course is offered	
5	Department in which module/course is offered	
6	Programme(s) in which offered	
7	NQF Level	
8	Year Level	
9	CESM Category	

10	Class mark in the last three years	Yr:	Yr:	Yr:	Average
11	Success rate in the last three years				
12	Class size in the last three years				
13	Numbers of staff members & other resources				

APPENDIX 2
Course Co-ordinator Statement[4]

Name of Course:

Course Coordinator:

    A. Purpose statement for the course

    B. Learning outcomes & assessment criteria

Please provide details of the learning outcomes and the assessment criteria associated with them in the table below:

Learning Outcomes	*Associated Assessment Criteria*
1.	● ●
2.	● ●
3.	● ●
4.	● ●

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[4] Course coordinators will produce this statement based on statements received from module/course lecturers.

Critical Cross-field Outcomes	Associated Assessment Criteria
1.	• •
2.	• •
3.	• •
4.	• •
5.	• •

C. Comments in accordance with RU Quality Framework and the Institutional Transformation Plan.

Please indicate whether you are commenting on a course offered online, face-to-face or via blended mode.

	Elements of Quality Review	Statements of Module Coordinator
1	**Course content** What content is taught in the course? How is the introduction of content structured over the life of the course? Are you sure that content is up to date and takes account of shifts in the field?	

	Does the course allow the inclusion of content relevant to the African continent and the Global South?	
2	**Teaching and learning approaches and methods** How do teaching approaches support students in meeting the outcomes? Can you identify any ways in which things could be done differently? Have any innovative teaching and learning approaches/methods been implemented? How have these worked/not worked?	
3	**Learning materials** What learning materials are provided to students? How much are students charged for these? Have learning materials been adapted to support students with disabilities? In what ways? Please provide examples of learning materials in the course file.	
4	**Assessment** How is assessment planned in order to ensure that students are provided with opportunities to demonstrate that they meet assessment criteria? How is formative assessment included? Can you identify any opportunities for improvement? Please provide examples of assessment tasks and feedback provided to students in your course file. Have any assessment innovations been implemented? How have they worked/not worked?	
5	**Moderation of Assessment**	

	Is internal moderation done for non-exit level modules? Is external moderation done for all exit-level modules? Are moderators' reports filed and, if needed, discussed by the lecturer, the course coordinator and the HoD? Are moderators' reports used to improve setting and marking of papers and improvement of course/module design and teaching and learning?	
6	**The tutorial programme (where applicable)** How is the tutorial programme structured and coordinated? How do you ensure that tutorials support and extend the learning achieved in contact sessions and do not merely 'reteach' content? What information is provided to students about the programme? Can you provide any examples of tutorial tasks? Can you identify any opportunities for improvement? What is the student: tutor ratio for the course? How are tutors trained and supported for their role in all courses? Are tutors encouraged to use African languages to facilitate concept-development for students where appropriate?	
7	**Practicals (where applicable)** How is the practical programme structured and coordinated? How do you ensure that practicals support and extend the learning that is achieved in lectures and tutorials? What information is provided to students about practicals?	

	Can you identify opportunities for improvement of practicals?	
	What is the demonstrator : student ratio for practicals?	
8	**Field Trips (where applicable)**	
	How are field trips structured and coordinated?	
	How do you ensure that field trips support and extend the learning that is achieved in the rest of the teaching and learning programme?	
	What information is provided to students about field trips?	
	Can you identify opportunities for improvement?	
9	**Student development and Support**	
	What student support/development mechanisms/programmes are in place?	
	What opportunities have been provided for students to develop their writing in the discipline?	
	What systems are in place for identifying and supporting students at risk of failure?	
	What systems are in place to follow up on students who have been referred for assistance?	
10	**Educational and Information and Communication Technologies** How effectively are information and communication technologies used to communicate with students and to support and develop student learning?	
11	**Plagiarism**	

	How many cases of Category A plagiarism have occurred in the course this year? How many cases of Category B plagiarism have been referred to the Departmental Plagiarism Committee? Are you satisfied that plagiarism is being identified and addressed adequately? Are you satisfied that the curriculum offers students adequate opportunities to learn about using and citing sources in your discipline?	
12	**Service-learning (where applicable)** Has service-learning been successfully integrated into the course – how?	
13	**Communication with students** How is information communicated to students? How are students provided with opportunities to interact with staff? Can you identify any ways this could be improved?	
14	**Course evaluation** How is the course evaluated? Is it effective? Can you provide examples of ways in which you have responded to student and peer feedback on courses and teaching?	
15	**Benchmarking** Have you compared this course with similar cognate courses offered at other universities in both South Africa and internationally?	

	What observations did you make if you did this? If you have not engaged with such comparisons, how will you incorporate this into next year's work?	
16	**Course coordination** How does course coordination take place? Are there any coordination processes that could be improved?	
17	**Enrolment and student success** Is the average student achievement in the past three years adequate?	
18	**Course review** When will this course be reviewed again?	

Appendix 3
Qualification/ programme alignment (to be commented on by Deans or HoDs or programme coordinators)

Comment on qualification or programme alignment		
1	Horizontal alignment and progression (i.e. between courses/modules offered in a year of study)	
2	Vertical alignment and progression (i.e. between modules/courses offered at different year levels)	
3	Vertical alignment of UG programmes to honours, Masters and PhD	

		Signature	Date
I.	Course/Programme Coordinator		
II.	Head of Department		
III.	Dean		

Appendix 4

Process Flowchart for Major Steps for Quality Review of Courses and Academic Programmes at Rhodes University

(Formal submission of course folders will occur in three- or four-year cycles, depending on the length of the programme**)**

HoDs will develop a schedule for submission of course reports in collaboration with departmental colleagues	Course coordinator to complete forms in Appendixes 1 & 2	HoD/Programme Coordinator to complete programme/qualification alignment form in appendix 3
Deans will establish a working group to consider the course submissions and to report any observations to Faculty	Copies of folders should be made available to IRPQP division through the Deans' office for central archiving as a requirement for external institutional reviews.	The folders of courses due for review at the end of any academic year will be submitted to the Dean by HoDs by no later than 31 January of the following year
Working group report is presented at Faculty Board	Working group report is presented at Academic Programmes and Curriculum Quality Committee	Working group report is presented at Senate